

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 3, 2009

The Honorable Alan Mollohan
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, and Science
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank Wolf
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, and Science
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Mollohan and Ranking Member Wolf:

We are writing to express our appreciation for your past support of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) and to respectfully request that you include the authorized funding level of \$60 million in the Fiscal Year 2010 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies appropriations bill for this program.

Our nation's coastal zone is under significant pressure from increasing unplanned development and competing demands for limited coastal areas. Coastal counties house almost 153 million people, over half the total U.S. population, and millions more travel to visit the nation's beaches and waterfronts each year. As growing populations and competing demands increase pressure along our coasts, CELCP provides an opportunity to protect lands that have significant value to local communities and the nation. Coastal and estuarine lands filter pollutants from stormwater runoff; control flooding after severe storm events; serve as vital nursery habitat for economically-important fish and shellfish; provide nesting and foraging habitat for coastal birds; and afford valuable opportunities for coastal recreation and nature-based tourism.

Created by Congress in 2002, and codified by legislation included in the recently approved H.R. 146, the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, CELCP protects "those coastal and estuarine areas with significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreation states to other uses." To date, Congress has appropriated nearly \$200 million for CELCP. This funding has allowed for the completion of over 150 conservation projects, with several more in progress. CELCP projects in 26 of the nation's 35 coastal states have already helped preserve approximately 35,000 acres of the nation's coastal treasures, and the number of acres will grow as more projects come to completion. All federal funding has been leveraged by at least an equal amount of state, local, and private investments, demonstrating the broad support of the program, the importance of coastal protection throughout the nation, and the critical role of federal funding to its success.

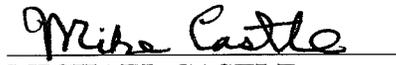
In 2007, at Congress' direction, NOAA began competitively selecting projects for CELCP funding. Over the last three years, NOAA, in partnership with the States, has identified over \$230 million of vetted and ranked projects eligible for CELCP program funding. At the same time, Congressional funding for the program declined dramatically to a low of \$8 million in Fiscal Year 2008. We continue to support the competitive nature of this program, but believe that an increase in funding is needed to meet the demand of the increasingly high-quality projects submitted to NOAA.

We urge you to sustain this federal-state partnership by using your discretion to fund CELCP at the authorized funding level of \$60 million in Fiscal Year 2010.

Sincerely,



LOIS CAPPS
Member of Congress



MICHAEL CASTLE
Member of Congress



JAMES LANGEVIN
Member of Congress



LEONARD LANCE
Member of Congress



ANNA ESHOO
Member of Congress



FRANK PALLONE
Member of Congress



MIKE THOMPSON
Member of Congress



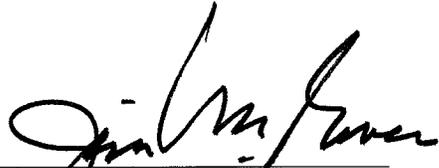
JIM GERLACH
Member of Congress



JAY INSLEE
Member of Congress

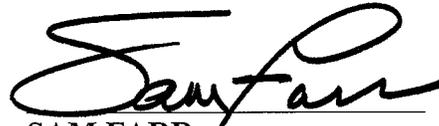


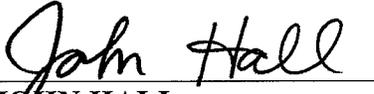
GREGORIO SABLAN
Member of Congress

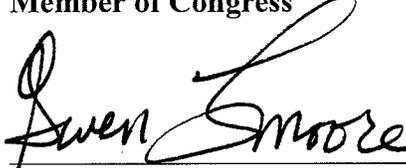

JAMES P. MCGOVERN
Member of Congress

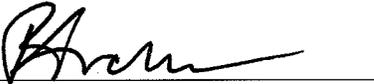

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Member of Congress


CHELLIE PINGREE
Member of Congress


SAM FARR
Member of Congress

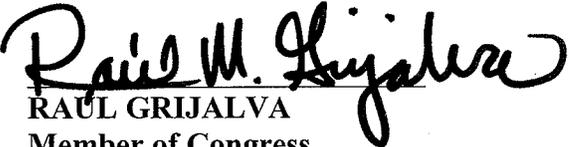

JOHN HALL
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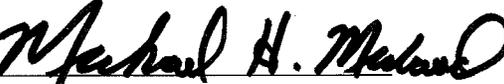

RAUL GRIJALVA
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ELLEN TAUSCHER
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Bill Pascrell Jr.

BILL PASCRELL
Member of Congress

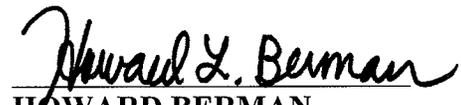
Frank LoBiondo

FRANK LOBIONDO
Member of Congress

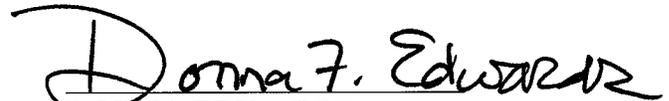
Rosa L. DeLauro

ROSA DELAURO
Member of Congress


SUZANNE KOMAS
Member of Congress

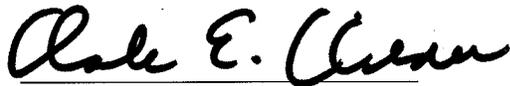

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